

# Leeds Children's Trust Board

## CLUSTER PARTNERSHIPS STANDARD TERMS OF REFERENCE

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Document Owner	Partnerships and Governance Lead, Director of Children's Services Unit

### 1. CONTEXT

#### 1.1 The Leeds Children's Trust Board (LCTB)

1.2 The Leeds Children's Trust Board was established in April 2010 and is part of the local co-operation arrangements which collectively make up the children's trust in Leeds. It provides the interagency governance of the Children's Trust arrangements in Leeds and has responsibility for publishing and monitoring a jointly owned Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) to improve the well being of children and young people in the city. It also provides a framework within which partners may agree to commission services together, with pooled or aligned budgets.

1.3 These terms of reference provide a 'minimum standard' for local cluster partnerships and in simple terms they are seen to represent mini Children's Trust Boards for the communities in the core geographical area they serve.

#### 1.4 Cluster Partnerships

1.5 Local clusters are key to the partnership and delivery arrangements for children's services in Leeds. The purpose of each partnership is to:

- enable local settings and services to work together effectively to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families
- build capacity to improve the delivery of preventative and extended services to meet local needs ('universal plus')
- promote the ambition of a child friendly city across the locality

This builds on cluster partnerships and networks which have developed across the city in recent years and complements partnership arrangements at area and city level.

- 1.6 Cluster partnerships in Leeds are the local expression of the statutory duty to work in partnership and the duty to co-operate placed on relevant partners to improve children and young people's well being.
- 1.7 The cluster partnerships aim to support integrated locality working in a consistent, open, transparent and accountable manner, encouraging democratic involvement from local elected members and the involvement of a range of partners.
- 1.8 Cluster partnerships will be linked together through Area Children and Young People's Partnerships. These will support the sharing of good practice, collective efforts to improve outcomes at an area level and provide a link to citywide partnership arrangements through the Children's Trust Board and Leeds Safeguarding Children Board.

## 2. FUNCTIONS

Cluster partnership functions cover:

- driving and monitoring local delivery of priorities in the city's children and young people's plan
- supporting progress with other partnership priorities (e.g. those from other city partnerships such as health and well being)
- using outcomes based accountability approaches to 'turn the curve' on local priorities and build local capacity to sustain progress
- encouraging innovation and improved collaborative working to develop local solutions to improve services for children and their families
- informing and influencing strategy, policy and commissioning which may impact on services in the locality
- ensuring services are appropriate to local needs
- agreeing arrangements to align or pool local resources and commissioning services to deliver local priorities
- ensuring participation of staff from local services, children, young people and their families
- improving communication and information sharing across the children's services workforce
- monitoring the performance of local services and developing action plans to improve performance
- sharing expertise and good practice within the cluster and across the city to help drive improved services

### **3. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

3.1 As key partnerships within the Children's Trust arrangements, the Children's Trust Board will agree the standard terms of reference for the cluster partnerships and agree the geographical area of operation for the partnerships.

3.2 The partnerships will provide local governance arrangements and leadership to support collective effort to deliver partnership priorities in the children and young people's plan and any other locally agreed priorities. They provide a local mechanism for accountability for progress towards better outcomes for children and young people.

3.3 Each partner will be accountable for decisions and service performance through their existing decision making arrangements (as is the case with the Children's Trust Board and Leeds Safeguarding Children Board). As appropriate, individual partners retain their statutory duties and responsibilities to the Director of Children's Services (section 10 of the Children Act 2004).

3.4 Cluster partnerships will be linked together via revised Area Children and Young People's Partnerships. This will support learning and sharing across the clusters, an interface with services delivered primarily at area or city level and a mechanism to link the cluster partnerships to the Children's Trust Board and Leeds Safeguarding Children Board. This will be supplemented by cluster chairs meetings each term to bring all clusters together and support the development of common ways of working, consistency and networking with clusters in other parts of the city.

3.5 Each partnership will be required to produce a short annual report and present this to the relevant Area Children and Young People's Partnership and the local City Council Area Committee. A report from each area would then be presented to the Children's Trust Board.

3.6 Each partnership will be required to produce a short mid year report to highlight key activities and progress to inform local stakeholders of the work of the partnership (including all partners represented and local school governing bodies).

3.7 The partnerships would operate as informal partnerships and would not be required to be constituted as legal entities.

3.8 Where there is a cluster based co-operative trust it is proposed that the trust (which is set up as a legal entity) operates as the cluster partnership.

3.9 Where a Joint Collaborative Committee is already in place, this may form the basis for a cluster partnership with consideration to the purpose, functions,

membership and accountability requirements covered in these standard terms of reference.

3.10 Any proposed significant amendments to the terms of reference for the partnerships should be recommended to the Children's Trust Board at the next available meeting after discussion at the relevant Area Children and Young People's Partnership. The Terms of Reference for partnerships will be reviewed periodically as part of the Children's Trust Board's governance review.

3.11 Cluster partnerships may wish to work with other clusters or share services to work across a wider geographical area. In addition partners may need to follow up issues, particularly regarding individual cases, with colleagues working in other parts of the city.

## **4. MEMBERSHIP**

4.1 Standing membership of each cluster partnership should include:

4.2 Local Settings

- Representative from each school in the area or agreed local representation via family of schools / joint collaborative committee
- Representative from each children's centre in the area or agreed representation from a group of children's centres

It is proposed that this should include at least one representative of local governing bodies who is not a member of school staff to provide a strategic governor input

4.3 Local Services

- Health – e.g. School Nurse Co-ordinator – confirmed through Leeds Community Healthcare
- Police – e.g. Neighbourhood Police Team Inspector - confirmed through West Yorkshire Police
- Voluntary, community and faith sector – confirmed through Leeds VOICE

4.4 Leeds City Council

- Local Elected Member (two members proposed for larger clusters or those crossing council wards) – confirmed through City Council Member Management Committee and local Area Committees
- Local Authority Partner – senior manager from Children's Services to provide strategic link to Children's Services and other council functions – confirmed through Children's Services Leadership Team

- Relevant local managers for integrated children's services – confirmed through Children's Services Leadership Team

4.5 Partnerships may also wish to establish a broader network of partners to progress local priorities and help improve local communications. This may include staff from local agencies such as college, housing, sports, leisure, libraries, area management, regeneration, probation, youth offending service, job centre plus, voluntary, community and faith groups.

4.6 Additional members may be invited to join the partnership to provide further support for improved delivery of local priorities as the partnerships evolve.

## **5. OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK**

5.1 The overarching framework for governance for the Children's Trust arrangements is covered by the Governance Document for the Children's Trust Board. Each partnership will take account of this in its work to support effective partnership working and good governance. Attention is particularly drawn to the following sections:

- i. Code of Conduct (section 9)
- ii. Promoting Equalities (section 10)
- iii. Decision Making (section 13)
- iv. Annual Review (section 16)
- v. Conflicts of Interest (section 18)
- vi. Exit Provisions (section 19)
- vii. Scrutiny, Audit and Inspection (section 20)
- viii. Data Management (section 21)
- ix. Complaints Procedure/Disputes Resolution (section 22)

## **6. OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

6.1 Each partnership shall meet at least termly or as deemed necessary to fulfil its functions.

6.2 The agenda of meetings shall be agreed by the chair in advance of the meetings.

6.3 In addition to this it is proposed that there would be an annual meeting for a broader network of local partners in each cluster and periodic meetings with cluster chairs, cluster managers and local authority partners at a city level.

6.4 It is proposed that an administrator from the Governance Services Unit in Children's Services provides a clerking service for the main cluster partnership meetings and supports an annual broader network meeting. This would also

assist with consistency, the ability to have standard agendas and minute formats, distribution of any common reports and scheduling of meetings.

6.5 Each partnership would need to agree a chair (and vice chair if required) who is able to drive the business of the partnership and represent the partnership at other meetings e.g. Area Committee, Area Children and Young People's Partnership, Family of School meetings.

6.6 It is proposed that cluster managers work with the chair, local authority partners and others to co-ordinate the work programme of the cluster partnership and the production of reports from the partnership.

6.7 Each partnership may wish to establish operational groups or task and finish groups to progress its priorities. These should have a clear remit and clear link back to the local partnership.

6.8 The Secretariat should receive reports not later than eight working days before the date of the partnership meeting. This is to enable papers to be distributed in time and for the chair to be briefed.

6.9 The agenda and papers should be sent out to all members at least five working days in advance of meetings. Exceptionally, tabled reports or additional information may be presented at meetings with the discretion of the Chair. Wherever possible, information will be sent electronically.

6.10 The partnership will be quorate if there are 50% or more members present at the meeting.

6.11 Draft minutes or action points will be circulated to members within 5 working days of each meeting with 5 working days for comments. Once approved, minutes / action points will be in the public domain and should be made accessible to local partners and stakeholders.

6.12 Support for the set up and development of these arrangements will be provided by colleagues who have supported the extended services clusters. This will include the circulation of standard templates for agendas, minutes, reports, action plans, self evaluation reviews and annual reports.

## 7. ANNUAL REPORT REQUIREMENTS

7.1 Each partnership will be required to produce a short annual report to inform the Area Children and Young People's Partnership, local Area Committee and Children's Trust Board of the work of the partnership and to inform the development and review of the City's Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). It is also recommended that these reports are taken through the governance arrangements for each partner represented on the partnership.

7.2 The aim of the reporting requirement is to:

- Provide local accountability by asking the partnerships to demonstrate the contribution being made to the local agenda for improved outcomes for children and young people
- Facilitate joined up working across relevant agencies, sharing of expertise and good practice
- Allow the Area Children and Young People's Partnerships and Children's Trust Board to assess levels of need, impact of actions and areas of underperformance to inform the development of the city's CYPP
- Give partnerships the opportunity to influence decisions made by the Children's Trust Board in relation to joint strategic planning and commissioning
- Provide a platform to raise any concerns including about the level of support the partnerships need from Children's Trust partners
- Allow the partnerships to identify local and area based strategic priorities for the forthcoming year

7.3 Partnerships will be provided with a standard template and schedule of dates to support consistent and timely reporting.